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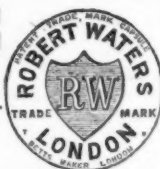
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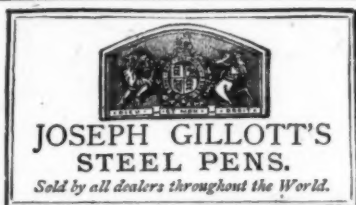
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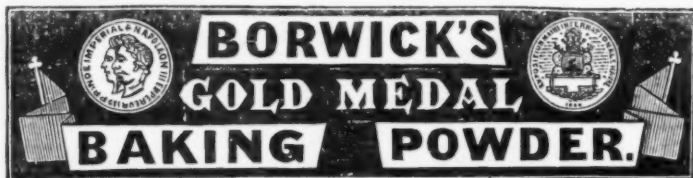
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CHAPTER XXXIII. SEYMOUR'S HOME.

IN 1589, A.D., out of "thankfulness to Heaven for the dispersion of the Spanish Armada," and also to perpetuate the memory of his wife, Frances Elizabeth, whose days had been devoted to charity, John Seymour, citizen of London and native of Dunwich, did devise and bequeath certain sums, to be expended in smoothing the path of those who had fallen from good estate to poverty. The bequest had been originally considerable, and the money had so grown with time that it had become in modern days—by reason of the restriction imposed by the testator of three years' previous residence within the bounds of Dunwich—out of all proportion to the claims made upon it; and some seventy years ago an edifice of goodly proportions had been constructed out of the funds, and denominated Seymour's Home. It was built in the Elizabethan style, perhaps in order to mark the date of the benefaction, but with improvements such as wealthy John Seymour, and even his Royal mistress, could never have commanded for themselves. Time had mellowed it, but it had suffered no touch of decay. The roof showed a patchwork of moss, and grey and yellow lichen; the walls were covered with ivy, close clipped only about the quaint old casements; the stone porches were in the summer time cool bowers, into which the roses that overhung them peeped at will, and filled them with delightful odours. The garden of Seymour's Home was not less than about forty thousand acres—that is, its front and western windows looked directly down

upon that exquisite landscape called the Garden of Kent. Its own modest plot of pleasure ground was on the east of the building, and was only separated from the village street by a low stone wall. The Home had been built for the accommodation of single persons, each associate having his own little self-contained residence, with a common kitchen; but the Miss Simcoes, to whose quarters Mr. Hulet and his niece had succeeded, had had a door cut in the wall of partition, to the very great contentment of the new comers. For at Seymour's Home Evy Carthew and her uncle were now located. From Balcombe the former had departed with an inexpressible sense, not of pleasure, indeed, but of relief, although it had cost her not a few tears to part with two such friends as Mrs. Hodlin Barmby and the widow; but Mr. Hulet had evinced neither regret nor satisfaction. Seeing that Evy was well contented, he also was content.

Her uncle was a riddle to her in this respect, as in some others. To have found such a shelter as Seymour's Home so soon after the storm that had wrecked their fortunes, and to know that it was assured to them for the future, was surely a cause for thankfulness; to be within the reach of such tried friends as Mrs. Mellish and the good Doctor, and yet to be removed from the intrusion of undesired sympathy or vulgar curiosity, was more and better than they could have had the right to expect. Yet Mr. Hulet seemed to take it all as a matter of course, acquiescing, indeed, in whatever was proposed to him, but with a melancholy pretence of interest such as would not have deceived a child. Occasionally, when the thought of his strange ways, and especially of the contra-

dictions manifested in his talk and actions—his sudden resolve to return to Dunwich, for instance, after protesting that he would not do so, and his inexplicable statement that he had not foreseen Judith's designs with respect to Captain Heyton, when he had himself expressly warned her of them—these things, I say, caused Evy ever and anon to shudder with the thought that her uncle's mind was giving way under the pressure of his misfortunes; but at other times she was able to convince herself that all these symptoms were but the effect of pre-occupation. Whenever he was left alone, he would fall into what happy childhood, to whom despondency is a marvel, terms "a brown study," brooding over she knew not what; and though he did his best to respond to her attempts to enliven him, the effort was obviously painful to him. When Mr. Mellish came, or Dr. Burne, he put on some show of cheerfulness, and his talk would even exhibit traces of its old caustic style. But his mood was apt to change with startling suddenness; and sometimes he would rise and leave the room without a word, as though his own laboured part in the conversation had become insupportable, and remain in his bedchamber until the visitor had taken his departure. One instance of this had been specially remarkable. Dr. Burne had been congratulating Evy upon the state of her uncle's health, which, singular to say, had greatly improved of late months (it was one of those strange, but by no means unexampled cases, where mind and body do not react on one another); and turning to Mr. Hulet, he said laughingly, "You see the good effects, my dear sir, of getting rid of all these rubbishy drugs that you used to swear by, and which would have poisoned any man who had not, like yourself, acclimatised himself to their effects."

"Dr. Burne," replied Mr. Hulet, with dignity and a sudden pallor of face, "If, as I have every reason to believe, you would avoid giving me offence, I entreat you not to allude to that subject; I"—here he stopped, as though repenting of an intention to say more, and simply added, "It is painful to me;" and then abruptly left the room. "Have you any explanation of this, Evy?" inquired the Doctor, raising his eyebrows; "your uncle never used to object to be rallied about his medicines, even when he believed in them!"

"No, Doctor, I don't understand it; but then," sighed Evy, "there are many

things about dear uncle now which are equally inexplicable to me."

"He is not communicative, then, even to you?" inquired the Doctor, gravely.

Evy shook her head.

"Umph! Doesn't talk much of what has happened, I suppose?"

"He never speaks of the past," replied Eva, sorrowfully, "and never thinks of anything else."

"I see; that's bad," said the Doctor.

The settled melancholy, diversified only by gleams of cheerfulness, which themselves were always followed by deeper gloom, that had taken possession of her uncle, would, under other circumstances, have distressed Evy above measure, but as it was, her solicitude and even her apprehensions upon his account had this good effect, that they did not permit her to brood over her own sorrow, else that would have been bitter indeed, and hard to bear. Within a few score yards of Seymour's Home, the woods of Dirleton were putting forth their summer glory; she never entered them, yet dark and cold was the shade they cast upon her. The year was not yet complete, since she had wandered beneath their branches with the man she loved; and though she loved him still, dearly as then, he was lost to her for ever. Each breath of wind that stirred them whispered sad farewells, and waved to her eternal adieux. Almost every spot on which her mournful eyes could rest had its especial association with him, and was the grave of a tender joy.

Though the very landscape spoke of her lost love thus, she had no ears for the tittle-tattle of the little town, which, indeed, occupied itself vastly more with Captain Heyton and Judith than with his past relations with herself. Balcombe had been too far off, for anything beyond vague rumours to reach the good folks at Dunwich, concerning Evy's engagement. They had no idea that matters had gone so far.

There was a general notion that he had "thrown her over," which, some said, was only "just what they expected," and others, "just what she deserved." Mrs. Colville did not hesitate to tell Mrs. Mellish that, in her opinion, the event was in the nature of "a judgment" upon Miss Carthew for setting her affections upon one whose position was so superior to her own. "And if I don't say a word about 'wiles,' or 'artifice,' my dear Mrs. Mellish, it is only because the girl has suffered

enough. The idea of being in Seymour's Home—a mere almshouse—and almost next door to that pretty place that was once their own, must, indeed, be very trying to her."

"The Cedars" was not almost next door, but it was even more within view of "the Home" than if it had been, because the village curved at that spot. From the window of her little chamber Evy looked directly down upon the garden in which she once used to take such pride; on the lawn, with its stately and far-shadowing trees; on the terrace, fringed with the well-trimmed hedge, where the pink and white May bloomed alternately in the spring; on the fountain, that leapt and sparkled in the sun, above the basin where she used to feed her gold fish. But this sight was not so painful to Evy as Mrs. Colville imagined. The Cedars was one of the few spots that had no connection with her lover; and she regarded it, if not with philosophy, certainly without humiliation, or any bitter sense of contrast.

Mrs. Mellish said but little in defence of her young friend; but it was only because she feared to say too much. If Lady Wapshaw and Mrs. Colville had but known how very painful it was to her to hear the theme discussed, they would have spoken of nothing else, until there had been an open rupture between them and the Rector's wife, which it was the latter's resolve, if possible, to avoid. She bore with much more equanimity their remarks upon the misfortunes of Mr. Hulet. Even to her charitable spirit there did seem a certain propriety in the coming to grief of a man who would not "hear the Church" upon the anniversary of the martyrdom of Charles I., and who had been, also, habitually given to speak evil of dignities; but still she pitied him, and shrank from the bad taste and ruthlessness with which her visitors would paint the penalties that had befallen him. Both those ladies "felt it their duty" not to call on Evy, lest they might seem to be giving their countenance to her previous presumption; but, being above measure curious to know from trustworthy sources—persons, that is, who took their own view of affairs—how Mr. Hulet and his niece "got on" at the Home, they permitted their daughters to call. It was a question with Lady Wapshaw whether her dear Margaret should not take with her some inexpensive little gift in the shape of a bottle of elder wine or a pot of marmalade—a scheme of

benevolence into which that young woman, however, refused to enter. To do both her and the Colville girls justice, indeed, they were more tender-hearted than their mothers, and felt a considerable commiseration for Evy, sunk now so infinitely below the plane of rivalry; and it was to their credit that the embarrassment throughout their respective visits—which were not repeated—was fully as much on their own side as on that of their hostess.

And all this time not one word had Mrs. Mellish breathed to Evy concerning Captain Heyton, or the girl who—as she had learnt from Mrs. Barmby—had so inexplicably taken her place in his affections. As a woman she naturally longed to hear the details of that most interesting affair, but as a true gentlewoman she forbore to distress her young friend by any allusion to it. At last, however, a circumstance took place which not only excused but necessitated her speaking to Evy upon the subject.

"My dear," said she, taking her accustomed seat in the stone porch one summer's morning by Evy's side, "I have brought some news, which is not good news, and yet which I should be loth for you to hear from less friendly lips than mine."

"I know what it is, dear Mrs. Mellish," answered Evy, quietly. "They are married."

"Yes darling."

There was a long pause. Evy had been expecting the tidings for weeks; yet, now it had come, it was a shock to her bruised heart.

"They are going to ring the bells, I believe, this morning, Evy, though that depends upon Lord Dirleton's wishes. It is not known if he will permit even that much: they have sent up to the Park to know. If I had my way, they should ring no bells."

"Why not, dear?" asked Evy, slowly.

"Well, I hardly know why not, since I have heard so little; but I feel—Hush! there they are!"

And crashing through the still, blue summer air came the marriage bells, so near, so loud, that for a minute no other sound was heard.

"Thank Heaven," murmured Evy. "He will have his own now, and will lose nothing by poor me."

"How is that, Evy? Although, if it pains you, do not tell me."

"It does not pain me now, dear friend," answered she, calmly. "I meant that if I

had been his wife, even at the best, he would have lost house and land in gaining me; and afterwards he might still have lost them, and through me, since but for me he would never have married Judith. That is what has distressed me so of late weeks. I fear I must have seemed very thankless, very indifferent——"

"My dear Evy, pray do not imagine that. But, for my part, if I were in your place, I should not be so considerate about Captain Heyton. It seems to me he has behaved very ill to you. My husband says, 'I give that fellow up; I was utterly mistaken in him. He is a false——'"

"Hush, hush," interrupted Evy, laying her hand upon her friend's shoulder. "Mr. Mellish is quite wrong. Captain Heyton is incapable of falsehood."

"What! not false, and yet he has married this girl," cried the Rector's wife, raising her voice by reason of the tumult of the chimes, "Not false to have jilted a girl like you!"

"He never jilted me. It was I who—who refused to marry him. He was a free man when he proposed to Judith."

"But why, Evy, did you refuse him? I think I can guess, however: your uncle had lost his money, and you would not let your lover, who had already given up so much for you, marry a penniless girl."

"That was one of the reasons," said Evy, quietly; "though there were others."

"Now is it not odd?" cried Mrs. Mellish, triumphantly; "upon my word my husband is always right: that was the very idea that occurred to him when he heard that your engagement was broken off. 'She has done it herself,' he said. Only when the news came about Judith, he altered his opinion. He thought the Captain had behaved ill throughout."

"He never behaved ill at all," said Evy, firmly.

"What, not in going straight from your side, as it were, to this other girl, almost an utter stranger, and making her an offer. Such a man can have no heart, Evy; in my opinion you have had a fortunate escape."

"How little you know Captain Heyton," returned Evy, with a sad smile. "He has a heart both tender and faithful. I wounded it to the quick, and he turned from me—he cared not whither. Then this girl met him. She was no stranger to him, but had striven to win him from me all along, though, blinded by my love and confidence, I had seen nothing of it."

"The girl is beautiful, I suppose?"

"Yes—as a serpent, and wise as a serpent also. Heaven forgive me, but I cannot wish her happy. I can only wish that she may make her husband so."

"I think that's quite as much as can be expected of you, my dear," said Mrs. Mellish, drily. "What a treacherous creature this young Mrs. Heyton must be, and to behave thus to her own cousin, too!"

"She was not my cousin; it was supposed she was poor Mrs. Hulet's niece, but that was not the case. She was a friendless orphan, whom that lady had adopted from a child."

"That is news indeed," returned Mrs. Mellish, thoughtfully. "It explains, too, in some sort, Lord Dirleton's consent to this marriage, which, though I did not like to say so just now, seemed to me as unlikely as in your case, though he has permitted the bells to be rung. If the girl had been of the Hulet blood he would certainly never have done so. You heard, doubtless, of his declaration that with his consent his nephew should never marry into a 'regicide family,' a very ridiculous objection, it is true, but then he always sticks by his word. He was very fond of his nephew, you see, and, however unwelcome this match may have been to him, it has given the old lord an opportunity for reconciliation. I have been told that Mrs. Heyton has a great deal of money. Is that so?"

"Yes; my aunt left her a considerable sum, I believe."

"What! and did she not offer to help Mr. Hulet in any way?"

"Oh, no; nor would he have taken anything from her hand; my uncle did not like her."

"And quite right, too," remarked Mrs. Mellish, approvingly. "I hope the old lord won't like her when she comes down here."

"She will hardly do that, I imagine," said Evy, the remembrance of Judith's cowardice in leaving the cottage without venturing to bid her farewell recurring to her. If the sense of wrong intended had thus stung her rival's conscience, how much more should the sense of wrong committed do so? No; Judith would never come to Dunwich while her uncle and herself were at Seymour's Home.

"Nay; depend on it, she will come if she can—that is, if Lord Dirleton asks her, which is naturally what she is doing

her best to induce him to do," argued Mrs. Mellish. "The bride and bridegroom are not going to reside abroad, at all events, as was originally intended, which looks significant. Moreover, the very delay in their marriage, for it was spoken of months ago as being immediate, seems to suggest that overtures of reconciliation have been made; at least, that is Dr. Burne's view, who knows the old lord better than any of us. His opinion is, if Lord Dirleton has given his consent to the marriage at all, which it now seems he has done, that Captain and Mrs. Heyton will very soon be at Dunwich Park."

"I think not," said Evy, quietly, as her visitor rose to depart; but her heart was sick within her. She was not afraid of meeting Judith in the least. It was Judith who would shrink from meeting her, rather; but the thought of seeing the two together, as husband and wife, that was wormwood indeed.

MUSHROOM GOSSIP.

THE only security I, your servant, believe, for mushroom-eaters to depend upon, is a personal and practical acquaintance with the several species which have been proved to be wholesome as well as pleasant food. Other tests fail, in numerous instances. For example, the Pall Mall Gazette tells us "Edible mushrooms do not change colour when cut, by the action of the air." But the horse mushroom, young and fresh gathered, does turn yellow on its white portions when rubbed, bruised, or cut, which the true mushroom, so far as I have seen, never does; and the peculiarity is so constant as to suffice to distinguish the former (*Agaricus arvensis*, *Agaricus exquisitus* of Badham's *Esculent Funguses*), as a species, from the true or cultivable mushroom, *Agaricus campestris*. On the other hand, almost all the poisonous *Agaricuses* have a flesh that does not change colour, while several *Boletuses* which are perfectly safe to eat do so change.

That the horse mushrooms, which thus turn yellow when bruised, are not poisonous, my own stomach has testified on innumerable occasions—and I am bound to believe it. They may be, when large and aged, less easy of digestion, because often less tender than the others, perhaps not quite so nutritious, but equally innocent. Notwithstanding its title, *exquisitus*, most

people will agree with Mr. Berkeley that its flesh and juices are of inferior quality. But as it continues to grow after the crop of wild true mushrooms is over, and also will show itself at seasons when the other does not appear, it is accepted as a succedaneum without being turned over too often on the dish. The epicure may look down upon it (though its nutty flavour and quality should plead for it), but the hungry botanist will be less fastidious.

Mr. Justice Denman has an idea that mushrooms which grow under trees are dangerous, because, as he supposes, they feed on decayed roots, which are (he qualifies the statement with a "perhaps") tainted with poison. That being so—perhaps—the learned judge advises, let everybody beware of eating mushrooms which grow under trees.

The caution is a broom which sweeps too clean. To obey it, everybody ought to beware of eating truffles, because oak woods are one of their favourite habitats, and it is even doubted whether they are not parasitic on roots. The horse mushroom persists in growing under clumps of trees, in half-shady situations to which horses and cattle retire to doze and ruminate, year after year on the very same spot—unlike the true mushroom, which is of a shifty nature, and loves to scatter itself about "promiscuously" when its hour for starting above-ground arrives. In such places the horse mushroom often attains considerable dimensions, though not equal to those assigned by M. Jules Verne to the antediluvian mushrooms, which are said to have been thirty or forty feet high, and under whose shade megatheria and amphibious ichthyosaurs sought shelter from the rays of the still youthful sun.

Now, the proof of the mushroom is in the eating. My gardener, on his way to and fro night and morning, passes a meadow in which stands a row of elms screened from public view by a hawthorn hedge. The spot is decidedly shady, except from the early morning's sun. Under those trees, when the stars are favourable, he finds horse mushrooms so frequently and perennially that, by an effort of imagination, he calls that meadow his mushroom-bed. The produce is always brought in with pride, and is shared, as is just, between kitchen and parlour. But did those under-tree mushrooms contain anything deleterious, the hand that writes

this would long since have lain in the grand terrestrial mushroom-bed.

The eatable boletus (*Boletus edulis*), which nobody, one would think, could mistake, after once gathering and handling a specimen, is to be found in many a park and plantation, abundantly in autumn, and occasionally in spring and summer. Where squirrels abound (and squirrels imply assemblages of trees) it is difficult to get good samples of *Boletus edulis*, whose stems resemble nuts in taste and somewhat in texture. Its favourite sites, indeed, are woods, especially those of pines, oaks, and chestnuts, and one variety is called *pinicola*, from its fondness for the society of fir trees.

Its structure is very curious. Its under surface nearly flat, instead of presenting "gills," as is the case with mushrooms, is covered with little holes like pin-pricks, which in fact are the orifices of tubes, at first white, then yellow, and afterwards of an olive or yellow-green tint. This fungus is best for table between the white and the yellow stages, or at least before the olive tinge is reached.

In the South of France the edible boletus is largely consumed under the name of *cépe*. You see ladies in the market bargaining for a fungus which few English people (unless bent on suicide) would eat for any consideration. It was first handed to me at a table d'hôte at Pau. I looked at it twice, and said, "*Merci, non.*" But seeing my neighbours engulph it without trembling, I plucked up courage and did the same. After repeated trials, I must pronounce it good; though fresh-gathered British mushroom is still better; and nearly agreeing with Berkeley's dictum: "Though much neglected in this country, it appears to be a most valuable article of food. It resembles much in taste the common mushroom, and is quite as delicate; it abounds in seasons (and in situations and districts) where these are not to be found." What a vast addition would be made to the national supply of food, if people could take to stewed boletus! But your intelligent labourer would just as soon think of eating a frog as of eating a *cépe*.

Who bids for my *Chantarelles*, *Cantharellus cibarius*, fresh from the forest and yellow as egg-yolks or apricots? At Rome, being in no great esteem, they fetch from two pence to two pence half-penny a pound, in England not two pence a hundred weight. Here, Badham tells

us, it is the Freemasons' fungus; who keep the secret. But a waiter at the Calverley Hotel, Tunbridge Wells, confessed that he had been in the habit of dressing them for years, on state occasions, at Freemasons' Tavern. Badham found immense supplies under the beech trees in Buckhurst Park, but no hands venturesome enough to gather them. The *Chantarelle* grows in profusion in the birch woods of Aberdeenshire, without the slightest suspicion on the part of the peasantry that it is an excellent article of food. Stew it gently and long, ye who dare, and mince it with meat or other fungi!

There are races of men, the Chinese and the African, capable of resisting miasms and climates which are fatal to Europeans or at least to Anglo-Saxons. Are there tribes and nations on whose constitution the poison of fungi produces little or no effect? The Russians, driven by the severity of their Lent to a vegetable diet, at a season when vegetables are scarce, eat fungi almost indiscriminately, without regard to their presumed wholesome or injurious qualities. Other peoples of Eastern Europe do the same.

It has been supposed that the poison is neutralised by the salting of the fungi for winter use and then storing them away in vinegar. Knowing nothing of the real nature of fungus poison, we cannot say whether this process constitutes the antidote—whether it effectually destroys the virulence of such dangerous species as the fly mushroom (*Agaricus muscarius*), one single individual of which, mixed with wholesome kinds, is sufficient to produce fatal results.

Here again may be urged the necessity of a specific knowledge of each particular form of fungus. With cultivated mushrooms people suppose themselves safe. They gather and eat them in perfect confidence, without taking the trouble to examine them. In some continental cities, none but cultivated mushrooms are allowed to be brought to market. John Bellows's wonderfully tiny pocket dictionary translates "*champignon de couche*" by "edible mushroom;" which, as a rule, is quite correct. But mushroom-beds occasionally produce, especially before, and sometimes after, the appearance of the intended crop, others besides the true mushroom.

It must have been some fatal admixture which caused the accident recently investigated before a court of law. The young

woman who died must have eaten some fungus which the "skilled witness" did not see. Otherwise, if that witness, as reported, saw nothing in those fungi to distinguish them from the true mushroom, his skill was equivalent to that of the cook who should stuff her leg of pork with parsley and hemlock, in her inability to distinguish one from the other. A "by-the-bye" worth the room it takes, is that accidents for fool's parsley, the lesser hemlock, may be avoided, by allowing none but curled or double parsley—as easy to cultivate as the common sort, and much more decorative as garnishing—to enter the kitchen. When Cardinals and Popes have died of dishes of mushrooms, who knows that the mushrooms were not made the scapegoat of some more active ingredient?

The Italians, again, seem to have fungus-proof stomachs. Under the arcade at Genoa, over which most of the hotels are situated, sacks of "funghi" are offered for sale, so mixed, dried, and cut up into shreds, that he must be indeed an expert mycologist who could tell you what those sacks contain. Whilst hundreds of baskets of what we call toadstools are carried home at Rome for the table, almost the only one condemned to be thrown into the Tiber by the inspector of the fungus market is our own mushroom. In such dread is it held in the once-Papal States, that no one knowingly would touch it. One of the fiercest imprecations among the lower orders, not nice about the quality of their oaths, is to pray that any one may die of a pratiolo, or meadow mushroom.

On the other hand, although the strings of dried boletuses sold during winter in every market place in Italy are composed of many different species, no mischief, Vittadini says, was ever known to occur from their indiscriminate and very extensive consumption. He thence concludes that all the species of this genus are innocuous, or, at least, that drying and cooking extracts any deleterious principles they may contain. His inference is supported by the daily use amongst the peasantry of certain districts, of *B. luridus*, which of all bad boletuses passes far the worst. Berkeley calls *B. luridus* "very deleterious," which Badham, however, says requires further confirmation.

Vittadini also experimented with it in large doses upon animals, who did not suffer in consequence. But we cannot infer that because certain fungi are eaten by animals they are, therefore, fit

for human food. Goats eat tobacco and several other noxious plants, with apparently absolute impunity. Of innocuous fungi some animals are fond. *Agaricus grammopodius* is greedily eaten by cows. Sheep often eat *Marasmius oreades* and other fleshy and leathery species. Many are the favourite food of slugs; but those creatures are omnivorous and even devour their own dead kindred. A crushed slug or snail is a capital bait for a slug.

The vulgar tests of the wholesomeness of fungi, such as cooking a piece of bright silver, or an onion, with them, are perfectly worthless and delusive. There is no infallible sign whereby the unwholesomeness of any unknown species can be detected. Nothing can be depended on except practice, familiarity, and experience; and even behind them lies a mystery.

As the Gardeners' Chronicle of Oct. 4, 1873, remarks, improper selection of species, ignorance, or carelessness will not account for all the phenomena—such as that certain persons can, and other persons cannot, eat with impunity particular fungi. It will not account for the fact that the same fungus under one set of circumstances is harmless, and under another poisonous, to the same individual.

The case is rare, but it exists. In fact, there is an undeniable capriciousness—using the term in ignorance of what is the real cause—in the effect which many fungi produce. A correspondent of that journal has experienced this capriciousness in his own proper person. He states that for many years he was able to eat and enjoy mushrooms, but that for the last ten years he has been unable to do so without experiencing violent pains. He is actually poisoned by them. Even a dish flavoured with ketchup serves to cause him great discomfort.

Instances, I repeat, are very rare with true mushrooms; so rare that they need excite no apprehension; but examples of a similar capriciousness as to their effects are much more frequently furnished by another article of diet, shell-fish, as in the case of mussels. One member of a family will not be able to eat a single one without suffering, while all the rest will feast on them unharmed.

Gathering mussels on the rocks at low spring-tide is an amusement in which the writer and his belongings occasionally indulge. One evening we came home with

well-filled baskets; everybody supped heartily off them; nobody's sleep was disturbed by indigestion. Next day, after partaking of the rest at dinner, one person only, a young man in vigorous health, who had eaten his share the day before without the slightest inconvenience, was unmistakably mussel-poisoned, and became really ill during several hours.

Some children had a gluttonous father-in-law, who knew not mussels, and wondered at the glee with which they ate them. One day, to have a mussel treat, those children clubbed their weekly pence. The mussels, real Stiffkey sluice, were bought, cooked, hustled, and served. The father-in-law peeped in, pounced like an ogre on the dish, took it away, and ate it all himself. He approved, for once, the children's doings; they were not such fools, respecting mussels at least, as he thought them. But an hour afterwards he was in a fever. His skin turned red, with such intolerable irritation, tingling, and itching, that he was near tearing the flesh off his greedy old bones.

It is said that those children grinned in their sleeves and went to bed, though mussel-less, with tears, not of sorrow, in their eyes.

The age of the individual may have something to do with peculiarity of constitution and liability to certain influences. A gentleman, who, all his life, had been untouched by sea-sickness in the roughest weather, on approaching three-score years and ten, took advantage of a brilliant autumn morning to go out to sea in a Norfolk crab-boat. He was there surprised by a new sensation, and could never afterwards place himself in similar circumstances without experiencing the same affection.

The uncertain influence of fungus poison may partially account for the opposite degrees of favour and disfavour with which different species are regarded by different people. A Breton peasant, if compelled to choose between being hung and eating a mess of mushrooms, might quite possibly prefer the hanging. For the choice of this sorry alternative he has reason; and it all depends upon a word. In other parts of France the same prejudice exists amongst the middle and the working classes. Begging Juliet's pardon, much depends on a name. Give a dog a bad one, and we know the result. Now the French do not employ two words, as we do, "mushroom" to indicate the good, and "toadstool" the

bad sorts of fungus. They have only "champignon," which comprises all, good and bad alike. "Mousseron," a small edible species—sometimes called "champignon" by Anglo-French cooks—is a term rarely employed. "Fungus" does not enter into French familiar speech.

When, therefore, a housewife reads in her provincial and prefectorially-patronised newspaper that a numerous family, or a troop of soldiers, or a party of sportsmen, were all found dead one morning, after supping on champignons they had recklessly gathered—and editors are glad of such filling-up stuff, which incurs no political penalty, fine, or liability to seizure—she concludes that everything called champignon is necessarily deadly, and goes into fits if asked to cook mushrooms which would fetch a fair price at Covent Garden. Whereas, if there existed a verbal distinction for things which possess such a mortal difference, she might profit by the good gifts of Providence, mushrooms, knowing that they were not identical with poisonous toadstools.

Other classes of vegetables, besides fungi, comprise both wholesome and deleterious articles of food. Even in the same vegetable or plant, some parts will be harmless or nutritious, others medicinal or deleterious. The capsule of the poppy yields opium, the seed it contains furnishes excellent salad oil. Surely the knowledge which distinguishes good from bad, necessary in all cookery and alimentation, might be extended with advantage to the fungus family, if people would take the trouble to use their senses. But with the great majority of men and women, it is the old story of "Eyes, and No Eyes."

HALF AN HOUR WITH AN OLD HERALD.

I HAVE a great fondness for stopping at old book shops, and peeping at odd volumes that lie scattered at their front. It is not an uncommon or unreasonable weakness. Many a good writer has confessed to an indulgence in it, or has expressed his sympathy with men whose taste and leisure have allowed them to enjoy it. Kindly hearted "Elia" owns to an affection for those who "filch a little learning at the open stalls; the owner, with his hard eye, casting envious looks at them all the while, and thinking when they will have done." I well remember when at school, and exhausted as to pocket-money, spending

parts of my half-holidays in the sober recreation of reading bits of novels, or of voyages and travels (which I liked much better), at the various old book-stalls that I chanced to pass, sometimes lingering so long to "snatch a fearful joy," that I really almost wondered I was not handed over as a thief to the police, and made in some way to disgorge all I had devoured.

Stolen pleasures are the sweetest; and even now that I have old books of my own, and have access to more libraries than I ever can look through, I rarely have the virtue to withstand the strong temptation of stopping to steal glances at the old books in the streets. Besides the pleasure of the feeling that one is getting something without having to pay for it, there is the even greater luxury (in nine cases out of ten) of thinking that your stoppage is a dreadful waste of time, and that instead of standing there you should be going about your business. For I note that, as a rule, one feels always most inclined to stop and read at bookstalls, when one is most engaged and least can spare the time for it; just as one is never so inclined for a cigar as when staying in a house where tobacco is prohibited, and as one never feels so tempted to take up a new novel, or play a game of billiards, or lie down and go to sleep, as when one has a lot of work that must be done at once, and the printer's boy is waiting in the ante-room for "copy."

One of the quaintest of old books that I have lately chanced to meet with in my course of way-side reading bears on its title-page the date MDCCXXIV. (men had leisure then to use the Roman numerals), and is called, in large red letters, "A Display of Heraldry, by John Guillim, Pursuivant-at-Arms." It is a thick substantial volume, about sixteen inches high, and weighing pretty near a stone; notwithstanding which dimensions it had reached a sixth edition in the year that I have named. But men then sat down to their reading with sedateness and solemnity, and great books were not esteemed so great an evil as they now may be in these high pressure times. The lightest of light literature then weighed heavy in the scales, and a book or two to lighten the tedium of a long journey would have formed no slight addition to the luggage of a traveller.

"Mr. Guillim," as he styles himself, informs us in his preface that the aim of his "Display" is to put in shape the "Chaos-

like contemperation of things, not only diverse but repugnant in nature, hitherto concorporated in the generous profession of heraldry; as the forms of the pure celestial bodies mixed with gross terrestrials; earthly animals with watery; savage beasts with tame; whole-footed beasts with divided; reptiles with things gressible; fowls of prey with home-bred. Which confused mixture hath not a little discouraged many persons, otherwise well affected to the study of Armory, and impaired the estimation of the profession." How far Mr. Guillim has succeeded in his effort to "dissolve this deformed lump," as he called it, I doubt if any reader would much thank me to inquire. The point was doubtless settled by the critics of the day when his "Display" was first produced, and to re-review a work of a century and a half ago is scarce what readers of this journal would care to have me do. All that I intend here is to dip into his pages as I did at the old book-stall where I chanced to come across them, and just jot down a few specimens of Mr. Guillim's patient learning, and his oddly-jumbled quaintnesses of humour and research.

His "introduction" begins in a manner highly scholarlike, with quotations from a host of classical authorities, including Virgil, Plutarch, Pliny, Plautus, Lucretius, and Livy, to prove that Arms may be defined as "tokens or resemblances, signifying some act or quality of the bearer." Their institution, he informs us, somewhat naïvely, "is not new;" and to show that he is justified in making this assertion, strange and startling as it seems, he tells a tale related by Diodorus Siculus, how that above four hundred years before the Israelites left Egypt, Osyris (as he spells it), who was surnamed Jupiter the Just, son to Cham the cursed son of Noah, called Janus by the Gentiles (as every member of a school-board surely ought to know), being banished from the blessed tents of Shem and Japhet by reason of the curse that had fallen on his father, was constrained to go in quest of some far-distant place, wherein he might settle himself, his children, and his people. Wherefore the intending emigrant assembled a great army, and, having appointed Hercules his eldest son as captain, he and Hercules and his two other sons, Macedon and Anubis, as well as sundry other gentlemen whose names have not survived, did paint certain signs upon their shields and other weapons, which signs or emblems were

afterwards called Arms. Osyris in his war paint "bore a sceptre royal, insigned on the top with an eye; Hercules a lyon rampant, holding a battle-axe; Macedon a wolf, and Anubis a dog."

As affording further proof of the antiquity of Arms, the learned Mr. Guillim brings the evidence of Pindarus, who records, on the authority of his own war correspondent, that the hero Amphiaras, in his Theban expedition, bore upon his shield the painting of a dragon; while the shield of Capaneus, one of the brave seven Thebes-besieging captains, is said by Statius to have been beautified with a doubtless correct likeness of the many-headed Hydra that Hercules had fought. Mr. Guillim also tells us that he has read enough of Virgil, and of Homer, to discover that Polynices bore a Sphinx, Agamemnon a lion, Theseus an ox, Seleucus a bull, and Ulysses a dolphin with a typhon breathing flames. The same source has moreover enabled him to state that Achilles had "his shield beautifully adorned with a great variety of things celestial; as the motion of the sun, moon, stars, and planets, and other (what other?) the celestial spheres: the situation of the earth, and the adjacent islands (!): the seas, with the ebbing and flowing thereof, &c." How many more things the "et cetera" may extend to, Mr. Guillim does not hint: but it seems to me an artist would find quite enough to do to paint the world and its surroundings, the tidal movement of the seas, and the whole planetary system on the surface of a shield.

Mr. Guillim is, however, careful to observe that these old military emblems and adornments of the armour were not strictly speaking Arms, according to the modern acceptation of the word. However, he considers that they afterwards became so, through the fact that signs and emblems, being useful for the purposes of personal distinction, for the encouragement of valour and securing of respect, were gradually submitted to certain laws of honour touching their assumption, inheritance and use. Thus the figures on the shields, and other personal ensignments, became hereditary emblems and family distinctions; were conferred as the rewards of merit by great people ("Emperors, kings and princes, and their generals in the field") and in their assumption were subject to strict rules. Mushroom millionaires, who now can buy

a coat of arms as easily as though it were a coat of Stultz or Moses, may learn from Mr. Guillim that, by the Law of Gentility in England, no one may bear arms but they who "either have them by descent, or grant, or purchase from the body or badge of any prisoner they in open war have taken." And they may further be informed that "whoso irreverently useth the arms of any man, seemeth to have offered indignity to the person of their bearer," and is therefore liable to an action of trespass, and, according to some writers, a trial by battle. Despite these penalties, however, such irreverence was practised in the time of Mr. Guillim as well as by the mushroom Cresi of our day: and he especially alludes to the "horrid mismanagement of funerals, by painters, undertakers, &c." as affording a marked instance of the way in which the laws concerning Arms were then abused.

Having thus described the origin of Heraldry, and shown that arms have in most instances a "sympathy" with their bearers (as the lion of Agamemnon), or a conformity with names (as "the family of Sprat, whose arms are three sprats,") Mr. Guillim next proceeds to treat with no less length than learning of "blazonings, and marshallings, escocheons, and abatements, charges, ordinaries, accidents, bends, tinctures, and impalements, artificials, chiefs, and fields," and all the other queerly-christened matters in his noble art. How he contrives to interweave with them odd scraps of natural history, and somewhat prosily to point a moral while so doing, the following brief extracts will suffice to show:—

"He beareth Argent a Tyger passant, regardant, gazing in a mirror or looking-glass, all Proper. This coat armour standeth in the chancel of the church of Thane, in Oxfordshire, in a glass-window of the same chancel, impaled on the sinister side with the coat armour properly pertaining to the family of de Bardis. Some report that those who rob the Tyger of her young, use a policy to detain their dam from following them, by casting sundry looking-glasses in the way, wherewith she useth long to gaze, whether it be to behold her own beauty, or because, when she seeth her shape in the glass, she thinketh she seeth one of her young ones, and so they escape the swiftness of her pursuit. And thus are many deceived of the substance, whilst they are much busied about the shadows."

"He beareth Argent, on a Mount Proper, an Hart lodged, Gules, by the name of Harthill, to which it alludes, being a Hart on a Hill. The Stag is a goodly beast, full of state in his gait and view, and among beasts of chace, reputed the chief for principal game and exercise. It is observed of him, that finding himself fat, he ever lodgeth and sulketh in secret places, to avoid chasing, as knowing himself worth following, and worth killing (as was said of the great Stag at Killingworth) but most unfit for flying."

Surely, a very sensible animal. By the way, the Stags of Capel Court used to "skulk in secret places," when the railway bubble burst. And here is another point of likeness between man and beast:—

"Or, a bear passant Sable, by the name of Fitzourse. It is written of the she-bear that she bringeth forth her young ones imperfect and deformed, like a lump of raw flesh, and licks it till it comes to shape and perfection. The she-bear is most cruelly enraged against any that shall hurt her young, or despoil her of them: as the scripture saith, in setting forth the fierce anger of the Lord, that he will meet his adversaries as a bear robbed of her whelps. Which teaches us how careful nature would have us to be of the welfare of our children, since so cruel beasts are so tender-hearted in this kind."

"Licking into shape," is a process very often adopted towards children, and many a young cub in manners has been bettered by it. Another fact in natural history Mr. Guillim speaks of, thus:—

"He beareth Or a Raven Proper by the name of Corbet. . . . It hath been an ancient received opinion, and the same also grounded upon the warrant of the sacred scriptures (if I mistake not) that such is the property of the Raven, that from the time his young ones are hatched or disclosed, until he seeth what colour they will be of, he never taketh care of them, nor ministereth any food unto them: therefore, it is thought they are, in the mean space, nourished with the heavenly dew. When he perceiveth his young ones to be penfeathered, and black like himself, then doth he labour by all means to foster and cherish them from thenceforward."

Old writers, as well as new, never seem to tire of flinging sharp words at the lawyers. This is how the worthy Mr. Guillim has a slap at them:—

"He beareth Argent, two Reynards countersalient in bend, the dexter sur-

mounted of the sinister, saltire-like gules, by the name of Kadrod-Hard of Wales. These are somewhat unlike Samson's foxes, that were tied together by the tails, and yet these two agree in *aliquo tertio*. They came into the field like two enemies, but they meant nothing less than to fight, and therefore they pass by each other: like two crafty lawyers which come to the bar, as if they meant to fall out deadly about their client's cause. But when they have done, and their client's purses are well spunged, they are better friends than ever they were, and laugh at those geese that will not believe them to be foxes, till they too late find themselves fox-bitten."

The ladies come in for attack too as well as the lawyers. This is how Mr. Guillim forgets his gallantry, and speaks of them:—

"He beareth Argent, three Peacocks in their pride, Proper, by the name of Pawne (not a designation to be proud of, one would think). The Peacock is so proud, that when he erecteth his fan of plumes, he admireth himself. He displayeth his plumes against the rays of the sun, that they may glisten the more gloriously: and he loseth this beautiful train yearly, with the fall of the leaf; at which time he becometh bashful, and seeketh corners, where he may be secret from the sight of men, until the spring of the year, when his train beginneth to be renewed. And such is the quality of many dames, who being painted (O fie! Mr. Guillim) and richly attired, cannot keep within doors: but being undressed, and in their own colours, they are loth that any man should see them."

Besides odd scraps of natural history, anecdotes of the ancients, and moral dissertations upon things of modern life, Mr. Guillim has a quantity of knowledge at command upon such subjects as astronomy, politics, and field-sports, which he every now and then drags in for the instruction of the readers of his book. On the latter point, indeed, he is much more learned, and agreeably diffuse, than one could have fancied an old writer upon heraldry would have ever cared to be. No fewer than three pages doth he devote to a digression on the names applied to "beasts of venery and of chace," and to setting forth the terms which are "ex-cogitated and used by proper foresters," as that a hare "seateth," a fox "knelleth," a hart "harboureth," and the like. For the benefit of cockney sportsmen, he ex-

plains that it is proper to say "dislodge" the buck, "start" the hare, "rouse" the hart, "bowl" the coney, and "unkennel" the fox. This last term is well-known, even in Cheapside, in our more enlightened day; but I doubt if there be many hunting gentlemen now within sound of Bow Bells who are aware of the correctness, alleged by Mr. Guillim, to apply the term of "holy water sprinkle" to a fox's brush. And, doubtless, there are many who go deer-stalking in Scotland who are in ignorance that in the second year of its existence it is the right thing to call a roe a "girl." For the instruction of town sportsmen, the thoughtful Mr. Guillim takes occasion also to "give some little touch of the propriety of terms commonly used by falconers in managing their hawks," the cause of his digression being the desire that gentlemen, by this means, in their mutual conversing, may be able to speak properly, when they happen to discourse of the "noble recreations and delights" of hunting and hawking.

What is meant by "exorbitant" as applied to certain animals is not so very clear; but Mr. Guillim uses it as being proper to such monsters as griffins and dragons, creatures deformed, as St. Augustine thinks, solely through the fact of "man's first disobedience." That a "mullet" means in heraldry not the fish so-called, but the rowel of a spur; and that a jack-pike is known rightly as a "Lucy;" these are, likewise, things that may be learned of the old writer whose work is under notice. It may be seen, too, that men's arms in some cases are legs; whereof three armed proper, conjoined in fess at the upper part of the thigh, flexed in triangle, garnished and spurred topaz, are quartered in the shield of the noble house of Derby. Quaint as he is in some of his expressions, Mr. Guillim rarely condescends to make a pun. He speaks, however, of the spider as having been "born free of the Weavers' Company," and he pokes some quiet fun at those "hedgehog holy ones, whose sharp censures and bitter words pierce through all those who converse with them." Moreover, speaking of the arms of Philip Hoby, of Glamorganshire, "Argent, three fusils upon slippers, gules" (fusils from the Latin *fuscus*, a spindle of yarn), he takes occasion to remark, on the authority of Pliny, that in Ancient Rome when maids were to be wedded, there attended upon them one with a distaff dressed and trimmed with

kembed wool, as also a spindle and yarn upon it, to put them in mind that housewifery and wifery were to go together. Another gentle hint, too, he conveys to the ladies, in speaking of the arms of Johannes de Fontibus, sixth bishop of Ely, who "beareth azure the sun, the full moon, and the seven stars, or, the two first in chief and the last of orbicular form in base;" telling them that "as the moon hath all her light from the sun, so hath the wife from her husband, and as the moon is ever lighter on that side which looks towards the sun; so should the wife study to be fairest in her husband's eye."

With this last sensible remark, I take my leave respectfully of Mr. John Guillim, having said enough to show what queer and jumbled scraps of reading and reflection may be found in his "Display." It is not a work that I should relish reading through, any more than Southey's "Doctor," which, in some points, it is like. But anyone who spends a spare half-hour in its companionship may learn somewhat more of heraldry than is known to men in general, and, while being so instructed, cannot fail to be amused.

AGASSIZ.

ONCE in the leafy prime of Spring,
When blossoms whitened every thorn,
I wandered through the Vale of Orbe,
Where Agassiz was born.
The birds in boyhood he had known
Went sitting through the air of May,
And happy songs he loved to hear
Made all the landscape gay.
I saw the streamlet from the hills
Run laughing through the valleys green,
And as I watched it run, I said
"This his dear eyes have seen!"
Far cliffs of ice his feet had climbed
That day outspoke of him to me;
The avalanches seemed to sound
The name of Agassiz!
And, standing on the mountain crag
Where loosened waters rush and foam,
I felt, that though on Cambridge side,
He made that spot my home.
And looking round me as I mused,
I knew no pang of fear or care,
Or homesick weariness, because
Once Agassiz stood there!
I walked beneath no alien skies,
No foreign heights I came to tread,
For everywhere I looked, I saw
His grand, beloved head.
His smile was stamped on every tree,
The glacier shone to gild his name,
And every image in the lake
Reflected back his fame.
Great keeper of the magic keys
That could unlock the guarded gates,
Where Science like a Monarch stands,
And sacred Knowledge waits,

Thine ashes rest on Charles's banks,
Thy memory all the world contains,
For thou could'st bind in human love
All hearts in golden chains!

Thine was the heaven-born spell that sets
Our warm and deep affections free,
Who knew thee best must love thee best,
And longest mourn for thee!

LEGENDS AND TRADITIONS OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

HAMPSHIRE (THE NEW FOREST.)

AMONG the great oaks of Lyndhurst and the beeches of Mark Ash we start in search of legends. The wild boars that Rufus saw sharpening their tusks against the tree-trunks; the wolves he startled to flight; the tall, red deer he pursued past the thorn-brakes of Bratley, or the funereal yews of Sloden, are gone for ever; but the woodland and moorland, the river and the sea, remain unchanged. The half-wild swine still grub there among the smooth acorns and the rough beech-mast; the charcoal-burner still broods over his smouldering fires, the bee-keeper still watches his hives in dell and glade, though the sunset gun at Portsmouth can be heard on Hordlercliffs, and the screech of the railway whistle reaches brakes that were woods before even the Conqueror's trumpets sounded at Hastings. By Christchurch Priory, past gleams of the Avon and its water lilies, by Milton and Brockenhurst, by Lyndhurst and Sloden, we shall dig for legends with all the patient toil of truffle-hunters. We shall wander over the New Forest, free as a kite, and ready to pounce down on any curious tradition or quaint superstition. On Ashhurst or Roydon we may swoop, at Boldre wood we may start our prey, or in Great Huntley Woods find the object of our search. We have long avenues of forest to travel through, leagues of dead leaves to trample under-foot. But the toil is pleasant, and we shall follow the ghost of Rufus with all the topographers of Hampshire to help hunt him down, till he tells us the sober truth about his own death.

That the Conqueror's son was a monster of cruelty, and steeped in vice, we are assured. We know, also, that he was a short, thick-set man, with a red face, red hair, and staring eyes. He stammered when he was calm, and, when drunk and angry, he swore the grisliest oaths. His father had doubled the severity of the Norman forest laws; but whether he had mercilessly burnt down Hampshire churches, and villages, to make fresh forest land, is now gravely

doubted. Mr. Wise, in his *New Forest*, has very ably summed up the arguments on the question, which are by no means uninteresting. There is no doubt that the traditions of the Conqueror's cruelty to the New Forest people are not strictly true. The New Forest once occupied the entire south-west angle of Hampshire: the great oaks, stretching in a sea of leaves from Southampton Water and the Avon on the east, and on the north, as the best local topographers agree, from the borders of Wiltshire to the English Channel. In the reign of Edward I. these boundaries were reduced, and now the forest only reaches from Bramshaw on the north to Wootton on the south, and from Hardley on the east to Ringwood on the west. In the year 1079, say historians, just thirteen years after the slaughter at Hastings, William ordered the afforestation of this part of Hampshire. Now William owned a great deal of land in this district, inherited from Edward the Confessor; and by right of conquest Ashley, Bashley, Hulborn, Wootton, Pilley, nearly all Boldre, Eling, Breamore, and Ringwood fell to him when he seized the English throne from Harold.

The first historian who mentions William's cruelty is an anonymous writer, who continued the chronicle of William of Jumiègues, who died in 1135; the author of the *Saxon Chronicle*, the most contemporary authority, makes no mention of destroyed villages, or even of the enlargement of the forest. The *Domesday Book* furnishes no clue to the supposed cruelties of the Norman. Two-thirds of the district, including thirty manors, were, it is true, afforested. But, as Mr. Wise justly observes—carrying out Voltaire's shrewd suspicion—this by no means shows that the villages were destroyed or the inhabitants banished or murdered. At Eling, for example, it is expressly mentioned that the houses were still standing; and at Batramsley, Pilley, Wootton, and Oxley express mention is made that the meadows and pastures remained untouched. Hordle and Bashley, though contracted, kept up their value. Efford doubled its former assessment; while Brockenhurst and Eling increased in value, though reduced in size. The village of Totton, near the forest, was not touched, because it was all pasture and plough land; and the hamlets of Barton and Chewton, being corn land, were also spared. The mills at Bashley, Milford, and Burgate, all in the Forest,

says Mr. Wise, went as before; the fisheries at Holdenhurst and Dibden were undisturbed; the salt works at Eling and Hordle were untouched; only two churches are mentioned in Domesday, Milford and Brockenhurst, in the heart of the Forest, and those still exist. The New Forest land was never fertile, as many writers have proved. Except in some valleys, where the soil has accumulated, the Forest is chiefly sand or drift, with surface-earth only a few inches deep. "Half of the sixty-three thousand acres," says an agricultural writer of 1861, "are not worth one shilling and sixpence an acre." Where, then, could have arisen the population to fill thirty or fifty churches, and where are the ruins of those churches? There are still existing Keltic and West-Saxon barrows, the rings of British huts; the urns of Roman potteries still unbroken, but there are no ruins of Saxon churches or villages. The truth simply is this, William, "loving the red deer as if he was their own father," cleared away some woodman's huts, and increased the severity of the old forest laws, and being, as a conqueror, naturally unpopular, obtained a worse name than he deserved. Hence, long years after, the annotator of the Monk of Jumiegues writes, "Many, however, say that the deaths of Rufus and his brother were a judgment from Heaven, because their father had destroyed many villages and churches in enlarging the New Forest." The story, suiting the Saxon taste, grew and grew. Night after night, in the charcoal-burner's hut, or the woodman's bothy, the story-teller of the circle round the fire drew pictures more and more ghastly of the Bastard's cruelty.

From the peasants' stories the monkish historians drew their history. Ordericus Vitalis makes sixty parishes devastated, and tells us that those places had supplied Winchester with food. Walter Mapes reckons up thirty-six mother churches pulled down; while Knyghton, in the reign of Richard II., hesitates between twenty-two and fifty-two ruined churches, and attributes the afforestation to Rufus.

No wonder, with these beliefs, that the death or murder of Rufus is still the great tradition of the forest. Let us seek out the spot where he fell, deep among the oaks and thick in the fern. It is a haunted place. Lazy Lawrence, that lubber fiend, sleeps there under some huge beech. There is the Pixey, too, who, as a ragged

forest colt, will lead us astray into bogs; there are barrows haunted by fairies, to pass, and forest wells which, as the Hampshire woodman will tell you, are full of old gold.

Rufus's stone lies about four miles from Lyndhurst, where the Red King's spurious stirrup is still preserved, and where the timber and fern stealers are still tried at the Verderer's court. The pleasantest road to it, says Mr. Wise, is over Emery Down, passing the woods of Kitts Hill and James Hill. Another way is by Minestead, with a glimpse of the hills above Winchester, Southampton, and a gleam of the Wiltshire downs. Above the valley where the stone is to be found is the site of Castle Malwood, with its single trench, and Forest Lodge, where Rufus is said to have feasted the morning of his death. The story of his mysterious end is best told by William of Malmesbury. On the night of the 1st of August, Rufus, probably sleeping at Malwood, woke with a screaming supplication to the Virgin, and a dew of fear upon his brow. When his attendants rushed in with lights, he told them of the fearful vision he had had: he had dreamt he was bled, and that the blood had risen in a red cloud, and had darkened the very day. At daybreak Rufus's special friend, Robert FitzHamon, again awoke his fears with fresh forebodings of evil. A foreign monk, staying at the court, had also had a dream the same night: he had dreamt that he saw the Red King enter a church, and tear a rood image limb from limb in a paroxysm of rage. The image suddenly struck the king, from whose mouth, as he fell, issued flame and smoke that rose and put out the light of the stars. Rufus had already, perhaps, had his cups of Gascon wine, for, with the brutal laugh for which he was famous, he cried—

"He is a monk and dreams for money, like a monk. Give him, FitzHamon, this hundred shillings."

Still the dreams pressed upon the king, but he drank fiercely at his early meal; till his usual high spirits rose. He defied the dreams; he scoffed at the monks; he got him ready to hunt, and ordered his horse and dogs, and bows and spears and arrows. As he was booting and spurring, an armourer entered with six brand new arrows for the King. Rufus selected two, and gave them to Walter Tiril, one of his retinue, the lord of Poix and Poin-toise, and recently arrived from Normandy.

"The best arrow to the best marksman," said the King, as he gave the fatal present. The hunting-party consisted only of Rufus, his brother Henry, William de Bretenil, Walter Tiril, FitzHamon, and a few more. As they were leaving the courtyard a monk arrived, bearing a letter from Serlo, the abbot of St. Peter's, Gloucester: a monk of the abbey had dreamt that he had seen the Saviour and all the host of Heaven standing round the great white throne. Then, too, came the Virgin, robed in light, and flung herself at the feet of her son, and prayed him, by his precious blood and agony on the cross, to take pity on the English; prayed, too, as He was judge of all men, and avenger of all wickedness, that he would punish the King. The Saviour answered her, "You must be patient and wait; due retribution will in time befall the wicked."

The King read it, and laughed.

"Does Serlo," he asked, "think that I believe the visions of every snoring monk? Does he take me for an Englishman who puts faith in the dreams of every old woman?"

With this the party set out gaily into the forest. With shouts, and curses, and drunken laughter, and blast of horns, Rufus rode through the glades in search of the tall deer. The time of chase continued from early noon till towards sunset. Rufus and Tiril, as the setting sun was firing the oak boughs, found themselves alone. Just then a stag bounded by. The King flashed an arrow at it, and slightly wounded it; but on flew the stricken animal, with the hounds at its heels. At that moment, as the King stood watching the flying deer, shading his eyes with his hands, another deer, or, as Vitalis implies, a wild boar, broke covert, and Rufus shouted to Tiril—

"Draw your bow, you devil."

Tiril shot. The arrow glanced from the boar's back, or, as Matthew Paris says, from a tree, and struck full in the breast of the King, who fell without a word or groan, trying to pluck out the arrow, which snapped in his hand. Tiril, afraid of being suspected of assassinating the King, at once mounted his horse, and rode at full speed twelve miles to a ford on the Avon, where he had his horse shod at a smithy, the site of which still stands, and then rode across the river. Henry galloped to Winchester to claim the crown and seize the treasury. The other nobles scattered and left the corpse bleeding in the

fern. A charcoal-burner, named Purkess, whose descendants still live near Minestead, came by in the evening, found Rufus weltering in his blood, placed him in his cart, black with charcoal dust, and drove the dripping body to Winchester along the road now known as King's-road. An ugly iron-cased stone still marks the spot where the King fell. Leland, however, in his *Itinerary*, and Gilpin, in his *Forest Scenery*, mention Fritham as the place of Rufus's death, about which, indeed, none of the chroniclers say a word. Fritham is a hilly spot, surrounded by Keltic barrows and encircled with woods, and there was a chapel there in Leland's time.

The mystery that surrounds the death of Rufus is not likely to be ever cleared up. Tiril, according to one account, never saw the King in that day's chase, nor even on that day, as he swore solemnly to Hugh, Abbot of St. Denis, and to other persons; but then, why did he speed off like a guilty man and take ship for Normandy? According to some, the King was alone; according to others, surrounded by attendants. It is impossible even to say whether Tiril's arrow glanced from a stag, a tree, or a wild boar. Justly does Mr. Wise remark the suspicious fact of the King's hasty funeral, and the absence of inquiry into the cause of his death. Tiril, too, was a friend of the banished Anselm, as Anselm was of Henry I. The monks' dreams, too, look suspicious. Indeed, the ecclesiastical mind generally seems to have been prophetic on the matter; for the very night Rufus fell in the forest glade, the Abbot of Cluny told Anselm, his visitor, that he had seen Rufus summoned before God and condemned; and the next day, at Lyons, a youth told Anselm's chaplains of the King's death. Moreover, the day before the fatal arrow flew, Fulchered, first abbot of Shrewsbury, ended a sermon in that city, on the woes of England, with these ominous words—

"The bow of God's vengeance is bent against the wicked. The arrow, swift to wound, is already out of the quiver. Soon will the blow be struck; but the man who is wise to amend will avoid it."

Whether assassinated or not, we know that both priests and nobles hungered for this man's death. To the English clergy, Rufus was known as an Atheist and a red-handed persecutor, for he held in his own hand the archbishopric of Canterbury, the bishoprics of Salisbury and Worcester,

and eleven abbeys. He had banished Anselm, and promoted the rapacious Flambard, whom Henry I. instantly stripped of his power. He had refused to pay Peter's pence, and had denied the Pope's supremacy. He had plundered monasteries, and put out the eyes of some inhabitants of Canterbury, who had taken the part of the monks of St. Augustin. Nor had the nobles fared better. Rufus, goaded to fury by perpetual conspiracies, had hung his steward William, who was his own kinsman. He had lopped limbs and put out eyes wherever he went. The taxes he had made intolerable, his forest laws were written in blood. Amongst other vast estates, which he had seized, were those of Roger de Yvery, son of a favourite of his father's. In this last fact may we not perhaps find a clue—might it not have been the arrow of some revengeful vassal of Roger's, which pierced the evil heart of Rufus? Alanus de Insulis, better known, from his vast learning, as Le Docteur Universel, is indeed quoted by Mr. Wise, who shows that in his commentaries on the prophecies of Merlin, Alanus, who lived not long after the event, boldly asserts that Rufus fell by treachery.

Even after his death the monkish hate to Rufus continued virulent. The King's brother is said to have also died in the forest from riding against a tree, while his nephew Richard was, according to Florence of Worcester, killed there by the arrow of one of his knights, who expiated the deed by retiring into a monastery. The monks of Winchester also declared, when the tower of their cathedral fell, that it was because Rufus was buried in the nave. After all, who will ever know who let fly the arrow in Canterton Glen? but whoever shot that arrow, one thing is certain, that Rufus died while hunting, and no one lamented his death. There he lies in Winchester Cathedral, his bones mingled with those of King Canute.

Another tradition of the New Forest is connected with Cadenham Oak, which stands about three miles from Lyndhurst, on the Salisbury road, and is not far east of Stoney Cross, which disappeared about fifty years ago. This tree is supposed, like the Glastonbury Thorn, to bud on Old Christmas Eve (January 4th), in reverence for the old chronology and the sacred season. The present tree is probably a successor to the original "Boundary tree." Country people, who never go

half way in their belief, say that the Cadenham Oak is perfectly bare and leafless before and after Old Christmas Day, when oxen kneel in their stalls, and all nature, according to monkish tradition, does homage. All old things were thought miraculous in the olden time, and all unexpected events were explained by supernatural causes. The real fact is, that in mild winters in Hampshire the oak does sometimes show buds in early January; for the first frost, says Mr. Wise, seldom happens on the warm south-west coast till the new year, but the small amber leaves wither, and are not seen again till the full spring.

Smuggling traditions are to be found in the New Forest as thick as seed on the back of a fern leaf. Warner, at the end of the last century, says he had seen twenty or thirty waggons laden with spirit kegs, and guarded by two or three hundred horsemen, each bearing two or three tubs, coming over Hengistbury Head, and making their way in open day past Christchurch to the forest. There is an old chap-book tradition, that about 1776 a troop of robbers and smugglers—rough murderous fellows, half pirates half thieves—took possession of Ambrose Cave on the borders of the Forest, and ran spirits and plundered many a house. Soldiers were at last sent for; the men were tracked, the cave discovered, and after a rough and tumble fight the smugglers captured. The captain, the most execrable villain of all, turned king's evidence, and confessed that they had murdered upwards of thirty people, whose bodies had been thrown into a well, where they were found. Strange scenes happened in this wild life; there were men killed at Milton, and at Old Beckton a house was burnt down by a keg of carelessly broached spirits catching fire from the spark of a smuggler's pipe. The forest deer poachers turned smugglers when the opportunity arrived, and there was a cargo to run. Smuggling boats were built slyly in barns, and from that circumstance many inland fields are still called "the dockyard mead." Crews of foresters armed with flails defied the coastguard at Beckton, and at Chewton Bunny as many as one hundred tubs would often be run in a night. Now as each tub was worth two or three guineas, the profit of this run would be tremendous. Each man carried two or three kegs, one slung before and two behind; and if the

cliff was very steep, a chain of men was formed, and the tubs passed from hand to hand, till they could be buried in a ploughed field or sent on inland. The well-known proverb of the smugglers of the New Forest was, "Keystone under the hearth, keystone under the horse's belly;" which means that the smuggled spirits were concealed, either below the fireplace, or in the stable, just below where the horses stood.

The deer poachers, too, have their traditions, and men, says Mr. Wise, can still tell how they used to bait a hook with an apple tied to a bough to catch the deer; or caught a fawn and pared her hoof to keep the doe in one place till they wanted to kill her. Wild people to meet in the glade, wild people to meet on the sea cliff.

At Christchurch, between the Avon and the Stour, and on the south-west border of the forest, there is a fine legend about the old Priory that stands on rising ground, between two rivers, a sea-mark and a land-mark. It is full of good Norman work, and the tradition is that it was originally to have been built on lonely St. Catherine's Hill. The stones, however, taken up by day, were by night removed by the angels. The beams, long enough in the town, shrank, and were too short on the hill. The legend also adds, that while the sacred building was being reared, there was always a mysterious extra workman, who nightly came to the pay-gate and demanded his wages. This was Our Saviour.

The forest peasants have also a legend that the stone that built Beaulieu Abbey was brought across the dry bed of the Solent in carts, from Brinsted quarries. There is also a curious monastic story about the foundation of Beaulieu Abbey. In the year 1204, say the historians, King John, after various oppressions of the Cistercian order, convened a meeting of the abbots, simultaneous with his Parliament at Lincoln, and as soon as the white-robed men came, John ordered his retainers to charge them and trample them down. But no one would obey, and the monks flew from the tyrant in utter fear. That night, the usurper dreamt he was led before a judge, who ordered him to be scourged by those very monks. The next morning, John told the dream to a priest of his court, and declared that the vision was so vivid, that he felt the stripes when he awoke. The priest told him that God had been most merciful, in thus simply chastening him in this world, and revealing the secrets

of his will, and implored the King to send at once for the abbots, and implore their pardon. The next year John founded the Cistercian Abbey of Beaulieu, placing there thirty monks from Citaux, and endowing it with land in the New Forest, and manors, villages, and churches in Berkshire. He also gave it one hundred marks, and exempted it from taxes. Forty-five years after the foundation, the monastery was finished, and Henry III. and the Queen came to the dedication with a long train of nobles and prelates. Only a portion of the small transept is now left. The stones went to build Henry VIII.'s Martello Tower at Hurst. The old stone pulpit still remains in the refectory, from whence monks read to their brethren during meals. It was in the sanctuary here, on the banks of the Exe, that the wife of the King-maker took refuge after the battle of Barnet, where her mighty husband fell; here, too, skulked Perkin Warbeck, after he had deserted his troops, and, hero decoyed by Henry VII.'s soft words, Perkin rode towards London, only to find a gibbet at Tyburn. Some old walls near the church are still called "The monks' Vine-press," the sloping meadows beyond, were vineyards; while on the north rise the woods of the New Forest.

In a region like the New Forest, where the country people still believe that the Man in the Moon was sent there for stealing wood from the forest, and that the death's-head moth was never seen before the execution of Charles I., we may expect to find traditions; and in Brockenhurst (the badger's wood), once in the very centre of the New Forest, it is remembered that years ago droves of deer would sometimes in the stillness of the night come tearing up the village street, the village dogs often leaping out on them and killing them, or driving them back to the forest. In the reign of Edward II. Peter Spelman held a carnate of land here for the service of finding the King an esquire clad in mail for forty days in the year, and whenever the King came to hunt, litter for his bed and hay for his horses; and some miles from Brockenhurst, is the manor of Bishop's Ditch belonging to Winchester College. The forest people say that this place was a grant of land, consisting of as many acres as the Bishop of Winchester could, in a day, crawl round on his hands and knees.

At Fordingbridge, in that part of the valley of the Avon which was once part of the New Forest, tradition says that

during fence months the lord of the manor used to keep guard on the bridge to stop all suspected persons, who could only on the north-west leave the forest that way.

Farther on beyond Ibbesley Manor is Moyle Court, just on the boundary of the forest, looking out upon the woods of Newlyn and Chartley. Here Dame Alice Lisle lived, who was burnt to death by Judge Jefferys for sheltering two Puritan fugitives after the battle of Sedgemoor, where her son had fought in the King's army. The house is half ruined now, the oak floors removed, part of the fine old mahogany staircase broken up, the tapestry destroyed, and the iron gates gone. But the private chapel remains with its *Ecce Homo* and carved string course of heads. Dame Alice lies under a brick tomb in Ellingham churchyard. About eight miles away, across the Avon, near Woodland Farm, the Duke of Monmouth was captured in a ditch, where the sparkle of his eye had betrayed him as he cowered among the brambles.

Traditions still linger in the forest of the terrible winter of 1787. An old man told Mr. Wise that his father, during that hard year, lived in a lonely farm-house. The storm began in the night; by the morning the snow-drift was so deep that the door could not be opened. Luckily, a back room had been filled with fuel, and provisions had been laid in. The storm increased till, by-and-by, the straggling hedges were covered, and even the woods began to disappear. After a week's snow, a heavy frost followed, and the snow hardened. People went out shooting, and wherever they saw a breathing hole in the snow, they fired and nearly always killed a hare. The snow continued on the ground seven weeks, and, when it melted, the stiffened bodies of horses and deer covered the plains.

YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROBSON'S CHOICE," ETC.

CHAPTER LXVI. REACTION.

I LEFT the room. I found Mole on the landing outside.

"What has happened?" he asked. I told him that Sir George was ill—that he had fainted. I added that Propert was with him.

"But you yourself, Duke? Have you seen a ghost? You're as white as a sheet; you're all of a tremble; your teeth

are chattering. No, don't answer. Come down-stairs. Lean on me."

I was in a sadly confused state, with a feeling of sickness and giddiness oppressing me. I could see nothing distinctly. There was a painful singing in my ears. I only knew that Mole was supporting me in the kindest way, full of solicitude on my account.

A little crowd appeared to have gathered round me. All were talking at once, and all at random, in a most bewildering way. So it seemed to me.

"Give the lad air," I heard Mole say. "Let's have room to breathe;" and he opened one of the windows. I was reclining in an easy chair in the dining-room. It had changed its aspects somehow. All the pictures I remembered to have seen there—the black, highly varnished old masters in their massive frames—had vanished.

There was a kneeling figure beside me, proffering smelling salts, a woman—Rosetta! Could it be? Yes, certainly, Rosetta!

How did she happen to be there? She had called to sit to Sir George, possibly. But her presence did not surprise me. Nothing surprised me. I was as one dreaming.

There was talk of sending for a doctor, for me or for Sir George. I knew not which.

"But you're better, now. You're beginning to look more like yourself," someone said; Mole, I think.

"My poor Duke!" Rosetta was smoothing my hair from my forehead, was bathing my temples with eau de cologne.

"You were scared at seeing him faint."

"It wasn't that only," I said.

"It's nothing. He'll be well again, presently;" Mole was speaking. "Sir George—"

I stopped him. "Take care what you say. He's my father." I saw that he interchanged significant glances with Rosetta.

"And you didn't know it? Never guessed it? The news came upon you suddenly? Ah! I see!"

"My Duke! I read it in his eyes long since—whenever he spoke of you—I was sure of it. And then there was a trembling in his voice, though he tried to hide it. But I knew it must be so. And your mother—his wife? Of course, of course. Pardon me, my Duke. But why—no, no, that's your secret. I've no right to ask."

She pressed my hand tenderly; there were tears in her eyes. Mole stood silently surveying me, rubbing his chin meditatively.

"I always said Sir George was a strange man," he muttered, after a long pause. "I perceived a likeness from the first, 'a trick of Cœur de Lion's face,' I said. You remember? The line is in King John: act the first, scene the first."

They were very kind to me. Soon I recovered somewhat, and could stand unassisted, though I still felt weak and tremulous, and greatly depressed. Rosetta went her way, having first made inquiries concerning Sir George. He was going on well, Propert reported. He was sleeping quietly on the sofa in his studio.

A strange, shabby-looking old man had been passing to and fro—haunting us—now sitting on a hall chair, now peering into the dining-room. He wore list slippers, and was very silent in his movements. There was an air of mystery about him.

"Who is that?" I enquired of Mole. He hesitated, and looked at me curiously.

"He's a model. He sits to artists. That's his profession." From his manner I knew that he was deceiving me. I said as much.

"Well, that's what I'm told he is. That's what I tell other people he is," Mole answered. "Can you bear to hear the truth? Haven't you had enough of bad news—no, I don't mean that, either. But some scandal against Sir George is involved; that is, it would be scandal if it wasn't true. I mean—indeed, I scarcely know what I do mean."

"This man—who is he? Why is he here? What does he want?"

"If you insist, I'll tell you."

It seemed to me, that he was really anxious to tell me.

"That man is what's called, 'a man in possession.' The fact is, there's an execution in the house. Don't start. We're getting accustomed to things of that kind. There was one in last week while you were away. We got rid of it, and the pictures that used to hang here, at the same time. Now comes another. That's the plain truth—the still plainer truth being—shall I go on? I will. Sir George is ruined."

"Ruined?"

"That's the word. It's been coming a long while. It's come at last. You remember our noticing, some time ago, that his hand shook very much? If that

had been all! It wasn't. His elbow has been shaking too."

I did not understand him. He gave a pitying shrug.

"I must speak by the card. And yet there are so many flourishes of speech handy that would drape a little the ugly nakedness of the fact! Hush! Sir George is a gambler. The money that comes by canvas goes by green baize."

He appeared much gratified by this fanciful method of stating the case.

"You understand? Hazard, roulette, the dice box. That's the secret of his ruin, and of a good many others' besides. It should not be, of course; but it is, and has been for some time past. Don't be angry. You would have the truth, you know. He's ruined. It's odd, but somehow I like him the better for it. He's so much nearer to me now than when he was rich. After all, what's wealth but a bubble? A bubble that hasn't blown much my way, however. I'm not a fair judge of it, perhaps. Mind; I don't say he won't recover himself. He may. Easily. He's only got to work; if he'll but turn on the tap, money will soon flow forth again. But—as I happen to know—he's heavily in debt, and he will go on playing! Have you never wondered at his strange absence, at the late hours he keeps? Of course you have. Well, now you've got a key to the mystery. And then the opium! A strange man, as I have always said. But I have pained you, I see. You're quite upset. You're little used to troubles of this sort. I am, and I can bear them. Especially other people's troubles. It's astonishing how lightly they weigh upon one. But I'm talking idly. I feel for you, and am sorry for you, my boy, believe me when I say so. And go up-stairs and lie down for awhile. That will be the best thing for you. And try and sleep. I'll come up presently, and see how you are. Don't be down-hearted, there's a good lad. Life's like the Devil—never so black as it's painted, or so insupportable as it seems to be. And if I might recommend such a thing, a stiff tumbler of brandy and water, very hot. You'll find it afford very considerable relief under almost any circumstance of difficulty. It would even, I do believe, minister comfort to a mind diseased. It's the real sweet oblivious antidote Macbeth asked for and couldn't get. He flourished at a remote and uncivilised period, you know."

I was wretchedly unnerved and ill; and for some days I was almost confined to my room. I slept badly; I suffered from violent headache and feverish restlessness; I was greatly perplexed as to the course of conduct I should adopt in the future. At present it was clear to me, however, that I could not quit Sir George's house. I had not strength of mind or of body to take so resolute a step. I was oppressed with doubts as to my duty in the matter, the while I bitterly reproached myself for my own infirmity of judgment. I was miserable at the thought of decision being required of me. Should I write to my mother or to my uncle for counsel? I could not. My hand refused to hold a pen; my thoughts shrunk back from being set down on paper: became inarticulate and vague and halting at every attempt. I felt that I was unable to do justice to Sir George's explanations—to render them intelligible or to obtain for them the consideration that was their due. I might be peremptorily bidden to part from him forthwith. That I could not do. Not because I felt for him the love of a son for a father, according to my ideal conception of such a love, but because I pitied him extremely, and my interest in him was most absorbing.

So I lingered on in the Harley-street house long after I was well and strong enough to have quitted it. I was hoping for—I knew not what—but for some conclusion of this trying condition of things to be achieved by chance, without any stir on my part.

Sir George had recovered, I learnt, had even resumed work in his studio. He had made many inquiries as to my state of health. To Mole he had openly spoke of me as his son. His manner had been alert and energetic; almost cheerful, I was informed.

The man in possession had disappeared. Sir George had found means to satisfy the more importunate of his creditors. He appeared, indeed, to be now well supplied with money again. He had been occasionally absent, and he still kept irregular hours.

It was very late one night—or rather I should say that it was in the early hours of morning—when I heard, as I lay restless in my bed, the street-door close; and I knew that Sir George had returned home. For a while all was silence. Then came the unaccustomed sound of some one mounting the stairs. It could only be Sir

George. He was visiting his studio on the first floor? No, he was still ascending. He had passed the second-floor. He was on the landing outside my door. The handle was softly turned and he entered—a tall figure, wrapped in a long dressing-gown, and carrying a lighted candle, the flame of which he shaded with his hand.

He advanced into the middle of the room, and then stopped suddenly with a start.

"You are awake, Duke?" he said, gently. "My boy, I did not mean to disturb you. I was anxious to know how you slept, that was all. You have been ill, you know, but you are better now, thank God. I came up last night, but you were sleeping soundly then, with a strange look of your mother on your face. I never noticed it before. It was fancy, perhaps; a painter's fancy; we're privileged to be fanciful about likenesses. The room strikes cold—you should have a fire, Duke; and they've given you but a thin coverlet, my poor boy." He took off his dressing-gown, and spread it over the bed. "That's better, I think. There, I'll not disturb you further. Something I had to say, but it was not much. You'll not quit me, Duke, stealthily, without a word? You're sure? I've been dreading that so much. My boy, it would break my heart—and I have a heart, so I find." There was something of anguish in his look and tone, as he said this. "I came to see that you were still here, to make sure; it was that brought me, at least I think so. And to tell you, if I could, that you are very dear to me, Duke, my son. But, there is your mother to be thought of; you will not forget her; you will be true to her, whatever happens. I submit myself humbly to her decision and to yours; only, when you can, think of me as your father. Say the word over to yourself, again and again, until it becomes at last a thing to be believed and felt. Now try and rest. God bless you, Duke. Your mother has prayed that often, I know; and surely her prayers will be heard, though mine may not."

He bent over me and pressed his lips upon my forehead. His tears fell upon my face. Then very softly he withdrew.

His manner had been most simple and tender; scarcely a trace of his old artificial air of courtesy was now perceptible. Yet a suspicion remained with me that he had not said all he had designed to say—that something occupied him to which he could not give expression.

Mole's solicitude on my account was most complete at this time. It was by his counsel I undertook, so soon as I had sufficiently regained strength, various excursions about the environs of London in quest of fresh air and new scenes. He was my companion, escaping without difficulty from his duties in the studio, and labouring incessantly to cheer me by the liveliness of his talk, the while, in deference to my depression, he curbed his high spirits somewhat, and refrained from exuberance of levity. Nothing, indeed, could have been kinder or more considerate than his bearing towards me during this very trying period of my life.

Mention of Sir George he prudently withheld almost altogether. But he discoursed much of his own early life and its vicissitudes, his sense of the sufferings his profession had entailed upon him being much mitigated by a perception of its humours. He had plans for the future, confessing to weariness of his labours and position as a painter. He thought of visiting America; not as an actor, however. That had been feasible once, but was so no longer, he admitted. But something in the way of stage management, he thought, might be open to him. Or he would go as secretary to—why not Miss Darlington? She had been offered an engagement in the States. She would accept it, of course, sooner or later. Kean was the first actor who boasted a secretary; but the thing was becoming common enough now. Rosetta must have a secretary. Could she secure a better than Fane Mauleverer? For in such case he intended to resume his professional name. As to the question of propriety—he understood they were particular on that head in America—what did I think of it? Surely, scandal would be hushed in the presence of his bald head. Or, if need be, he'd "make up," as a patriarch of a most superannuated description, and pledge himself never to wash the paint off his face during the whole period of his sojourn in the States. Or he would even marry Bembridge—for, of course Bembridge was going too. Miss Darlington would not stir without her. He thought her success in America would be quite unprecedented: he was convinced of it. They had never had anything like her in America yet. And—there was another thing—would I entrust him with a copy of my tragedy? What did I say to The Daughter of the Doge being produced in

New York? I could easily introduce a part for Bembridge; something like the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. A great success was really quite possible. He would do all he could for the work. Upon that I might confidently rely. If necessary, he would even go on as one of the senators, or one of the bravos, he did not care which. The time had gone by for his appearing as the Doge or as Ludovico, although, a little while back, he felt satisfied, either part would have fitted him like a glove. Would I turn the matter over in my mind? All this was part of his plan for comforting me.

He spoke very tenderly of poor Tony's death, and with genuine grief. He greatly gratified me by his cordial way of sounding the poor boy's praises. He had seen Vickery, it appeared, and found him in a tolerably hopeful state. I judged that the old man still looked to saving something for Rachel out of the wreck of her father's estate.

And with Vickery, he told me, he had discussed the question of Rosetta's marriage. It was clearly invalid. Lord Overbury's wife, the divorced Lady Wycherley, still survived. That was beyond question. Even had it been otherwise, where would have been the advantage? Lord Overbury had no property in Scotland, where only his marriage with Rosetta could possibly have held good. Was it not better that she should be free from him and all claims on his part?

We had walked some distance along the western road I knew so well, from my journeys to and from home. Turning towards town, we stopped to rest at an old, red-roofed, gable-windowed wayside tavern, that has long since vanished. It was part inn, part farm-house—much frequented by drovers and carriers, with straddling horse troughs and a swinging sign-board in front, and spacious yards and barn-like stables in the rear. In its rude, old parlour, with wainscoted walls and sanded floors, we remained some hours. Mole, after his manner, made friends with its frequenters, for the most part graziers, salesmen, market gardeners, and tradesmen of a humble sort. There was much animated conversation, smoking of pipes, and circulation of glasses.

It was dark night and late as we passed down Piccadilly. We turned out of our way a little to the right, that Mole might point out to me "Crocky's," as he called it, the giant gaming club in St. James's-street.

Suddenly he gripped my arm tightly, and drew me back.

A figure, wrapped in an ample Spanish cloak, such as gentlemen of fashion then wore in winter or at night over evening dress, was descending the steps of the stately mansion.

"Sir George," whispered Mole.

CHAPTER LXVII. HAZARD.

SIR GEORGE crossed the road, not turning to the north towards Harley-street, as I had expected him to do, but walking swiftly in an easterly direction. With what object? We could not tell. It was no business of ours. We followed him at a little distance, however.

Our agreement to do this was unspoken; it seemed a course irresistible to both of us. A momentary sense of shame, I certainly felt; I was, I knew, playing the part of a spy; unworthily dogging the footsteps of my own father. But my curiosity was excited; and, moreover, it was only from time to time that I could convince myself that I was in truth Sir George's son. The fact had still only an intermittent reality for me.

Mole, I think, was wholly without scruple on the subject. He was resolved upon ascertaining his employer's errand. He perceived a certain mystery in the case; and that he was bent upon solving, if possible.

Sir George hastened on, threading various streets, and approaching the purlieus of Leicester-square. He stopped at last in a narrow, ill-looking thoroughfare. We halted also some thirty yards behind him. Suddenly we missed him.

"I begin to understand," said Mole, after a few moments' reflection. "Turn up the collar of your coat, Duke. Pull your hat well down on your forehead. That's it. Come on further. We're going to see a little life. Don't be frightened; only keep close to me, whatever happens, mind that. Now then; this is what's called 'a silver hell.'"

He tapped gently at the door of a dingy house, in the windows of which no light whatever appeared. All was darkness. Presently a little wicket was opened. Mole spoke in a low voice through the bars to some one inside.

"All right!"

We were admitted: Mole thrusting his arm under mine, and drawing me in with him. A man wearing a ragged fur cap, and a watchman's coat, with a red com-

forter wound round his neck, stood behind the door. With him Mole seemed to be well acquainted. I had often before been impressed by the fact that Mole's friendships and intimacies were quite innumerable. He seemed to know and to be known by the whole human race, to be on amicable terms, inclining towards jocosity, with everybody. He always obtained recognition wherever he went. To hackney-coachmen and crossing-sweepers, I had noted, he was especially known, and I had found him to be on a familiar footing with street-traders in matches, and even with beggars.

"When I first knew that man," he whispered to me, "he was under-prompter at Warwick. They said then, that he had once kept his hunters and a pack of hounds. I never felt sure about that. Now he's—what you see."

We were advancing along a dark, narrow passage towards a room at the back, from which a great noise was proceeding. On our way we were brushed against by some one hurrying out, much muffled up. Indeed, muffling up seemed to be the fashion with all that night.

"George is here. Look out!" he whispered to Mole as he passed. "I'm off."

By "George," he clearly meant Sir George.

"Proper!" Mole explained to me, for I had failed to recognise him. "To think of his being here! But, like master like man. I always had a suspicion that Proper punted. Now, keep close."

We entered a large room upon the ground floor, with some remains of decoration of a tawdry sort upon its walls. The ceiling was low, and much blackened by the fumes of a gaudy lamp hanging from it, and so shaded as to cast its oily, yellow rays as forcibly as possible upon the green baize cover of a large circular table beneath. In this way the sides and corners of the chamber were left in comparative obscurity. The windows were strongly barred and secured by outside shutters. There was an absolute want of ventilation. The heat was intense, and the vitiated atmosphere was heavily laden with tobacco smoke. From this cause there was a dense and blinding fog. An excited crowd had gathered round the table. The uproar was very great.

Mole told me in a whisper something of the game that was being played. It was, he said, "French hazard." Small wooden

bowls, rakes, and sundry counters formed the furniture of the table, which had a deeply-bevelled edge, to prevent, as I perceived, the dice from falling off and landing on the floor. A "croupier" occupied a raised high-backed chair, placed on one side of the room.

"Make your game, gentlemen, make your game!" he cried, incessantly, in harsh, hoarse tones. "Make your game! We bet the odds against nicks and doublets. Dice, Mr. Duberly. In one moment, gentlemen. Waiter—cigars and champagne! We've the best of refreshments, gentlemen. Waiter, soda and brandy to the gentleman on the left!"

Mr. Duberly, a shabby-looking man with a red nose, a green shade hiding one of his eyes, was the "vice croupier," it seemed. He opened a little packet containing three pairs of dice, and shook them together in one of the wooden bowls. In the "gentleman on the left," wearing a white box coat, with a shawl of many bright colours wrapped round his neck, I soon recognised—Jack Rumsey the pugilist! He was much changed, however, since I had seen him combating the Mudlark, in Chingley Bottom. He had lost the simple, almost rustic expression that had then distinguished him. His face wore now, indeed, a thoroughly villainous look; it was seamed with scars, and discoloured with bruises. His features appeared to have been flattened and battered out of shape. And his whole aspect and bearing were disreputable and degraded in the extreme. Yet he had once, and not so very long since, been a little curly-haired, rosy-cheeked carter boy on old Jobling's farm!

He was far from sober, and was very rude and boisterous. He flung some money on the table, and taking up the dice, cried, "Seven's the main!"

"Seven's a nick!" said the croupier, paying the stakes. The caster had won.

"Eight's the main!" and he threw again.

"Eight the caster has to five; eight with the quates. No gentleman on the doublets." Again the caster had won.

"He's been winning all night, I hear," said Mole in my ear. "The Baker they call him. He lost the fight at Hurst Green the other day. They say he sold it. He's been very flush of money ever since."

"Seven's the main!"

"Deuce ace. The caster's out," cried the croupier, raking up the stakes. The

bank had won this time. It was another player's turn to throw the dice.

Even with Mole's assistance it was some time before I could comprehend the game. He avowed it to be very simple; still, as I judged, it was attended with many complications. But the circumstances were certainly not favourable to careful study of the matter. The heat of the room was stifling; the noise was deafening. The croupier kept up his hoarse cries of "Make your game, gentlemen, make your game!" varying his speech every now and then by recommendation of the refreshments to be obtained in the room. "Cigars and champagne, gentlemen; brandy and soda; ham and roast chicken on the sideboard; cold round of beef and lobster salad; the best of port and sherry; cigars and champagne, gentlemen. Make your game, gentlemen! We bet the odds against nicks and doublets!" And the betting of the players and bystanders—the laying and taking of the "odds," declared by the "groom porter," and calculated apparently with mathematical nicety—contributed greatly to the din. Moreover, there was much drunken shouting, with rude jesting, unmeaning cries, and tumult of all kinds. It was, to my thinking, a most extraordinary scene.

This much of the game I did learn. There were five "mains" upon the dice: five, six, seven, eight, and nine. Of these the player, moved either by accident or superstition, mentally selected one, which he called aloud as he shook the box and ejected the dice. If he happened to throw the exact number called, he "nicked" it and won. Throwing any other number, with some few exceptions prescribed by the rules of the game, he neither won nor lost; but the new number thrown became his "chance," and if he could succeed in repeating it before again throwing his "main," the number he had originally called, he won; if otherwise, he lost. In other words, having failed to throw his "main," he would lose his stake, but for the interposition of his second throw, which gave him yet his "chance" of winning. And meantime a most important element of the game had come into force—the laying and taking of the odds caused by the probabilities and the relative proportions of the "main" and the "chance." These had been accurately systematised and were subject to no variation.

Further into the mysteries of "hazard"

I need hardly enter. Indeed, I must admit that my acquaintance with the subject remains most imperfect, even now; while the game itself can claim to possess in these times little more than an antiquarian kind of interest.

I had become, almost in spite of myself, so occupied in watching the progress and vicissitudes of the game, that I was in some danger of forgetting the object of our entering the gambling-house. It was soon plain to me, however, that the chance of our presence being noted was less imminent than I had supposed. We stood in the rear of the players, and out of reach of the rays of the lamp. The eyes of all in the room were bent upon the table, and absorbed by the proceedings of the players. As each caster failed at length in his throws the dice box was passed to the next person upon his left, who at once continued the game.

As yet I had not discovered Sir George. Suddenly I felt Mole's warning pressure upon my arm. I had advanced too near to the table; I was entering the lamp's circle of light. I drew back instantly. Sir George was standing nearly opposite to me in the thick of the crowd. He had raised the fur collar of his cloak, and little of his face was to be seen. He appeared intent upon the game; and I felt assured that he had not as yet observed me.

Quickly I looked away from him; impressed with the conviction—unreasonable enough, perhaps, yet not to be resisted—that if I fixed my eyes upon him too constantly, he would somehow become conscious of the fact, and would in turn look at me.

I glanced towards the players on either side of him. One with a white, bristling chin, bleared eyes and sodden inflamed features, especially attracted my attention. As my gaze rested upon him I could scarcely restrain a cry of surprise.

Within a few feet of Sir George stood Lord Overbury! I could not be mistaken.

The dice box had now come to his hands.

"Five's the main!" he screamed in his old wild way. He shook the dice-box noisily, holding his hand on high, and swaying about, pushing his neighbours on either side away from him, so that he might have ample room for his operations.

Of what followed I had no clear under-

standing at the time, and I have even now but a confused sense. All was so sudden and violent as to be most perplexing.

It seemed that, by the laws of hazard, any player was fairly entitled at any moment of the game to demand fresh dice; and that this might be done even after the main had been called, and the dice were in the act of falling upon the table.

Sir George had exercised his right as a player. His clear ringing voice had called "dice" just as the main was thrown. It was therefore voided.

Calling five as his "main," Lord Overbury—it seemed—had thrown seven. He had failed to "nick his main," but still the throw had promised success. For now seven would have been his "chance" to win, the odds being three to two in his favour. He dashed the empty dice-box in Sir George's face.

The anger of the caster at being interrupted was shared by many betting on the issue. Sir George was denounced as an officious intermeddler. There were screams of rage, fierce oaths and furious threats. Fists were shaken at him, and sticks were raised and brandished in the air. The lamp was struck by accident or design, and set swinging to and fro, spilling hot oil upon the green table beneath. I found myself pushed hither and thither. It was with difficulty I could keep in Mole's neighbourhood.

Then occurred a scuffle; of the details I could form no judgment. But I saw that Sir George had seized Lord Overbury by the throat. The crowd seemed to surge about the room. I felt myself lifted off the ground. Jack Rumsey was striking to the right and left of him, with some confused aim, it seemed to me, at assisting his patron, Lord Overbury.

Presently the lamp was extinguished. A sudden lurch of the throng overthrew the table.

"Keep close," I heard Mole whisper in the darkness, "hold tight to my arm. Let's get out of this. I know the way. Whatever you do, keep close to me."

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